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2012

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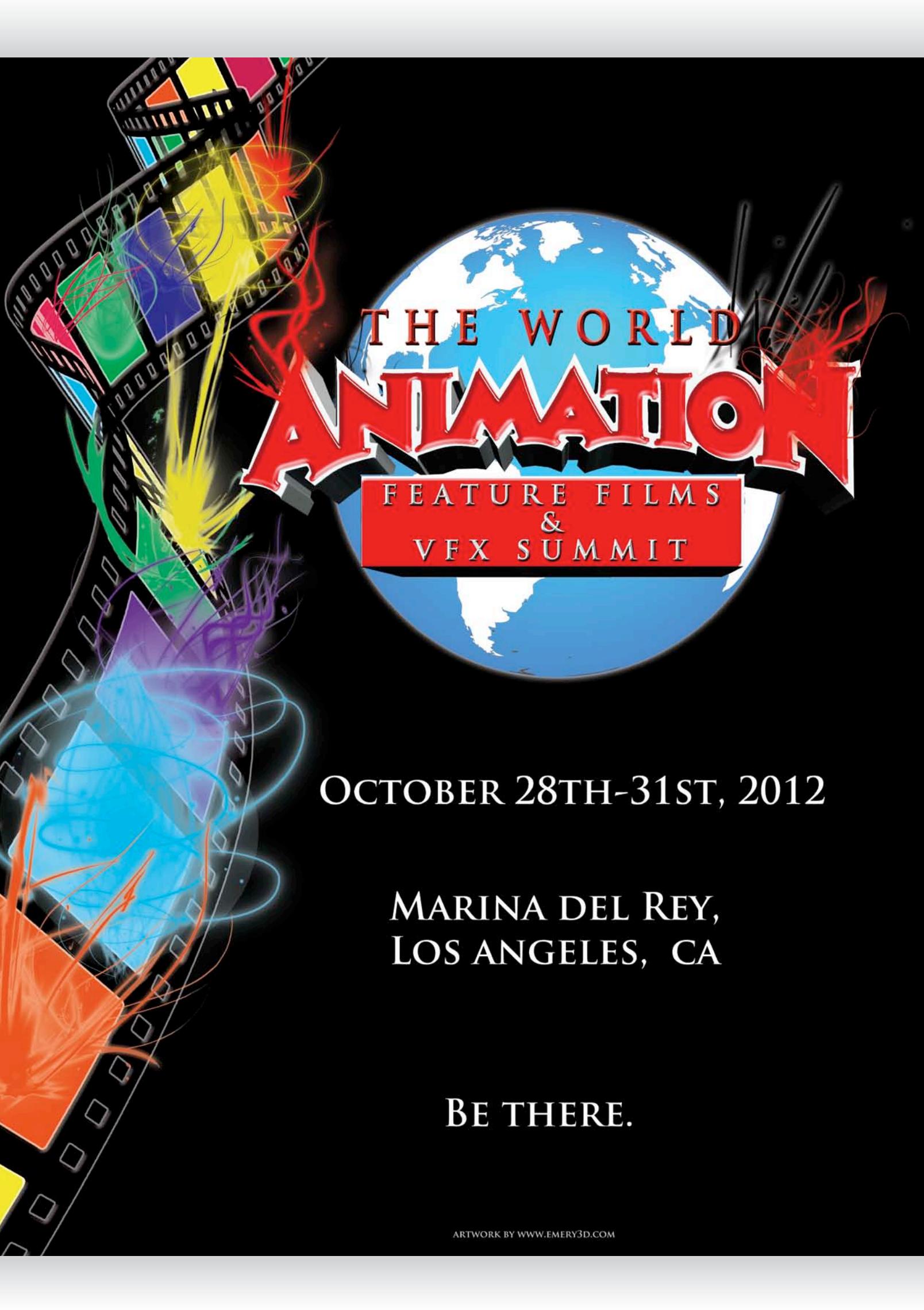
COMING THIS WINTER IN 3D

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10

Frame-by-Frame

4 June Animation Planner ...
Books We Love

8 When Toons Get Too Real

Thanks to the never-ending creativity of animation fans, we've noticed an abundance of photo-real depictions of favorite animated characters on the Internet. Here are some of our favorites.

Features

10 Euro Dash

DreamWorks' delightful zoo buddies find some new European pals in the third chapter of the ***Madagascar*** trilogy. [by Ramin Zahed]

14 Russian Animation on Ice

How Moscow studio Wizart Animation is updating the nation's CG industry with its first feature effort, ***The Snow Queen***. [by Mercedes Milligan]

16 Indie Champion

Fantastic Films brings a pair of crowd-pleasing CG-animated movies to the Cannes market this year:

18 Building a 3-D Persian Epic

Shahnameh, the classic 11th century work by Persian poet Ferdowsi, inspires the new 3D animated movie ***Rostam & Sohrab***. [by Mercedes Milligan]

20 Animated Movie Dossier 2012

Our annual guide to what the international animated feature landscape looks like for 2012 and beyond.

Television

28 The Sublime Madness of J.G. Quintel

The creator of Cartoon Network's Regular Show talks shop with us.

Home Entertainment

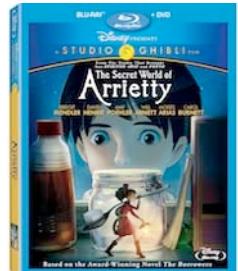
29 On Disc: Summer Stroll Down Memory Lane

A brief history of toons is on offer this month, from Disney's new ***Arrietty*** redo, to ***The Looney Tunes Show***, to '90s ***Jonny Quest*** or even a new ***Peanuts*** ensemble. [by Mercedes Milligan]

CONTENT



16



Click With Animag Online Every Day!

Click on www.animationmagazine.net every day for your chance to win toon prizes!

This month, we are giving away: ***The Secret World of Arrietty*** DVD/Blu-ray Combo Pack (courtesy of Disney Home Ent., Out on May 21)



14

INLAY Film © 2011 WizArt Animation © 2011

Cover: Wizart Animation's ***The Snow Queen*** is one of the many animated features making an appearance at the Cannes International Film Festival and Market this year.

EDITOR'S LETTER



DreamWorks Animation and the Cannes Film Festival have developed a mutually beneficial relationship over the past few years. Who can forget the year a costumed Jerry Seinfeld ziplined from the roof of the Carlton Hotel to promote *Bee Movie* or the way the *Shrek*, *Puss in Boots* or *Kung Fu Panda* movies captured the attention of festivalgoers with their parade of celebrity voice-over stars such as Cameron Diaz, Mike Myers, Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek, Angelina Jolie and Jack Black?

We're sure the popular cast of *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* will also steal the limelight on the Croisette this year. Studio head Jeffrey Katzenberg knows the value of making a big splash at the legendary movie event. One brief appearance by the likes of Jolie and Banderas and the paparazzi will be happy for weeks.

But beyond these crowd-pleasing spectacles, the Cannes market continues to be an effective place to launch indie animated features. In this special issue of *Animag*, we take a look at Wizart Animation's *The Snow Queen* (Russia), Aria Animation's *Rostam & Sohrab* (Iran) and Krayon Pictures/Fantastic Films' *Delhi Safari* (India), three very different movies created by artists from around the world. It's quite interesting to see how each of these movies were created, marrying elements of different cultures to produce a final product which is ready for global audiences.

It wouldn't be a Cannes issue without our annual dossier of animated pictures in the pipeline. We tried to provide you with the most up-to-date information on some of the big titles that are ready for their big-screen close-ups. Of course, we invite you to visit our website for the most up-to-date information on these and many other movies in the pipeline.

By the way, if you happen to be in Los Angeles for the American Film Market in the fall, you should definitely check out our new Animated Feature and VFX Summit, which takes place Oct. 28-31 in Marina Del Rey. We are planning an exciting line-up of panels featuring the biggest heavyweights in the toon business to help you out on producing and distributing your animated and vfx-driven projects. Make sure you visit our website (www.animationmagazine.net) for the latest news and speaker announcements. Until then, we hope you spend a fantastic time at the Cannes Film Festival and market. Say hi to all the stars (animated and live action) on behalf of those of us who are tied to our office chairs in early May.

Quote of the Month

"What I personally gravitate toward tends to be fantasy, medium dark—not too dark—fairy tales and sci fi. Stop-motion takes something on the page that's really dark and adds a little sweetness to it, a living toys realm."

— Director Henry Selick, on his upcoming top-secret movie project for Pixar

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Book Of The Kings

Rostam & Sohrab

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Shafi Aghamohammadian
President

Screening :

Tuesday, May 22 at 12:00

Palais – E

Aria Animation Studio.

Riviera stand F13/G10

1 *Snow White and the Huntsman*, this year's second (and cooler) take on the classic fairy tale hits the big screen today. With Kristen Stewart, Charlize Theron and Chris Hemsworth.




4-9 The Annecy Int'l Animated Film Festival and Market kicks off in France today, offering five days of diverse toon projects (204 in the official selection alone) and a special tribute to Irish animation. (annecy.org)

5 We know how you can fill those lazy summer hours: How about some new animated DVD entertainment? This week, you can have *ThunderCats: Season 1 Book 2, Animals United, CatDog: Season 2, Part 1* and *Phineas & Ferb: The Perry Files*.




5-7 Check out the latest tech innovations and hottest upcoming games at E3, taking place at the Los Angeles Convention Center this week. (e3expo.com)



8 DreamWorks Animation's *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* will take a big bite out of the family movie pie today. Sci-Fi fans will flock to Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*, which is rumored to have some connection to the helmer's *Alien* movies. Yes, summer has officially arrived!




8-10 If you can't stand the heat, get into the theater! **Red Stick Int'l Animation Festival** takes place in Baton Rouge, LA this week. (redstickfestival.org)



12 It's time for the brand new DC movie *Superman vs. The Elite* on DVD and Blu-ray, courtesy of the team at Warner Bros. Animation. Also out today is Toei Animation's *One Piece Collection 6*.




12-14 L&M movers and shakers will be rubbing elbows and perusing the hottest toon properties at **Licensing Int'l Expo** in Las Vegas this week. (licensingexpo.com)

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14-24 Film
Independent presents the **Los Angeles Film Festival** at venues across the city. Last year, Mikey Please's *The Eagleman Stag* took home the animation prize. (lafilmfest.com)



19 Today is a really awesome DVD/Blu-ray day for Dark Knight fans as both *Batman: The Brave and the Bold Season 3* and *The Best of Batman* arrive. That offbeat, live-action series *Wilfred: The Complete Season 1* (With Elijah Wood and his destructive dog buddy!) is also out today.



22 It's going to be quite a week for movies as Disney/Pixar's *Brave* gets ready to go against Timur Bekmambetov's *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*. Something tells us that the Scottish princess is going to kick the 16th president's butt at the box office.

22-24 Get your boop on at **The Grim Natwick Animation Film Fest** in the animator's hometown of Wisconsin Rapids this weekend. (bettyboopfest.com)



26 *Iron Man: Armored Adventures Season 2, Vol. 1* and *Lupin the 3rd: The Complete Series* are the only new animated titles today, so you'd better learn to love them!



26-28 No Danube blues at this event: the **NATPE Budapest** (formerly DISCOP East) content market kicks off in Budapest's beautiful Sofitel Chain Bridge, located near the famous river crossing. (natpebudapest.com)



Bruce Willis star in *G.I. Joe: Retaliation*, opening today. Also keep an eye out for Sundance favorite *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, about a young girl, her dying father and an army of prehistoric creatures called aurochs!




29 Who could've imagined that the boys' toy-inspired movie was going to come back with a sequel so quickly? Channing Tatum, Dwayne Johnson and

29-July 2 **Anime Expo**, North America's largest anime convention, takes over the Los Angeles Convention Center this week. If you get tired of the screenings, art and merch

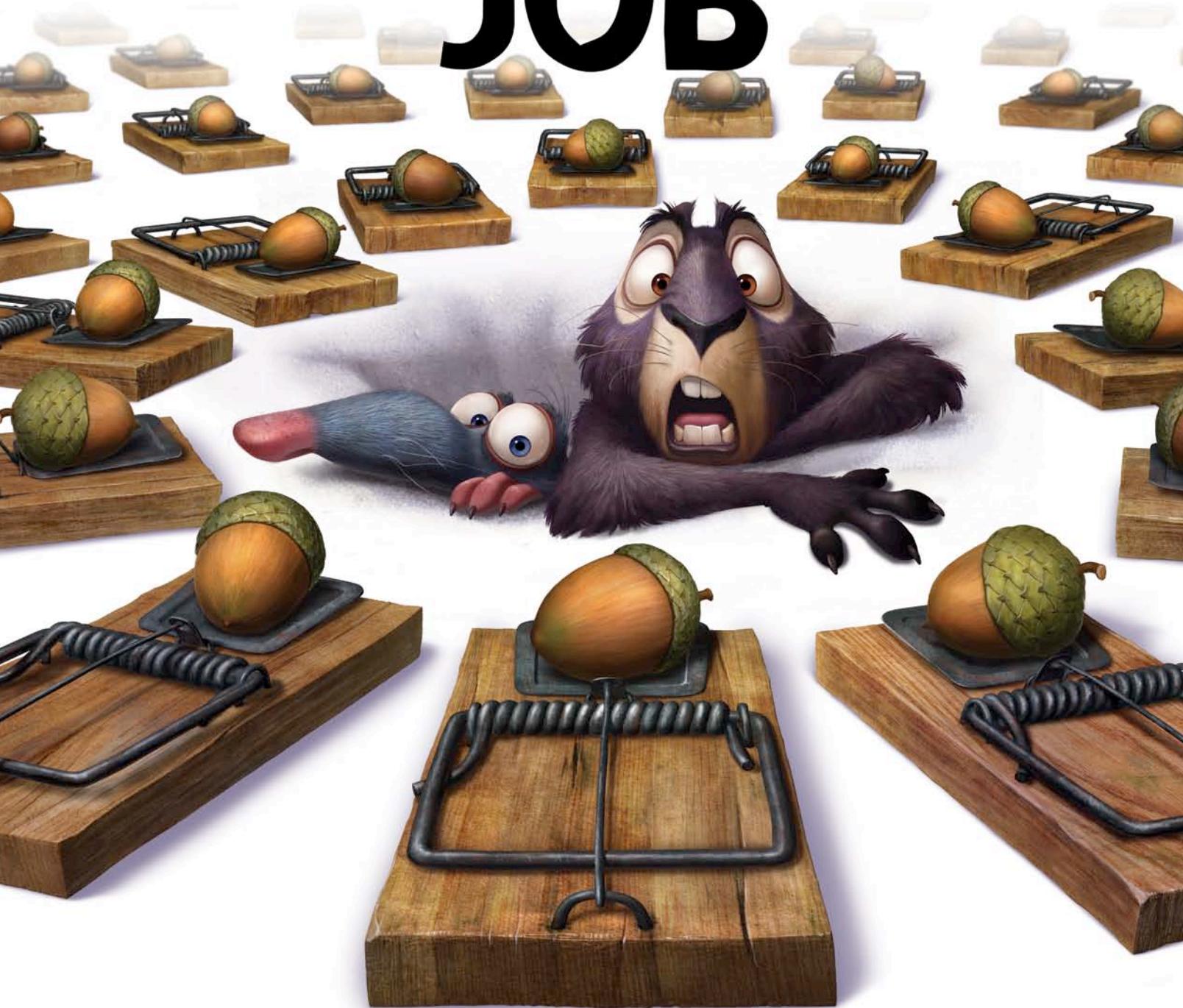


booths, events, contests and cosplay activities, pop open a *ramune* and enjoy the people watching. (anime-expo.org)



To get your company's events and products listed in this monthly calendar, please e-mail mercedes@animationmagazine.net.

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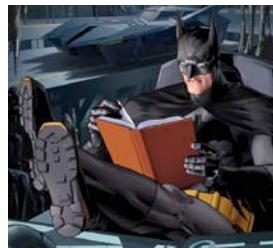
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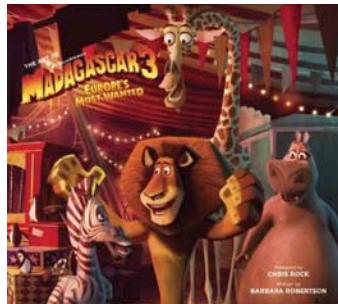
Books We Love



The Art of Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted

By Barbara Robertson

[Insight Editions, \$40]



Since DreamWorks Animation's latest installment of the *Madagascar* series will be making a big splash at the Cannes Festival this month, it's the perfect time to enjoy this visually stunning look at development art and vfx magic of the new feature. This richly illustrated volume is packed with insightful details provided by the directors (Eric Darnell, Tom McGrath, Conrad Vernon), producers (Mireille Soria and Mark Swift), set designer Carlos Zaragoza and key members of the vfx department. The author (who is a frequent contributor to this publication and an award-winning vfx and animation journalist) does a thorough job of casting light on all the technical details of the CG pipeline and making these challenging nuances easy to understand and enjoyable to the average reader. As is often the case with Insight Edition books, the production art is truly lovely to behold. Alex, Marty, Melman, Gloria and King Julien never looked better and their new European pals Stefano the sea lion, Vitaly the tiger and Gia the jaguar are great additions to the pack. Let's not forget that the gorgeous European locations are good enough to inspire a thousand vacation reveries.

Titles to Look Forward to...

The Art of Brave

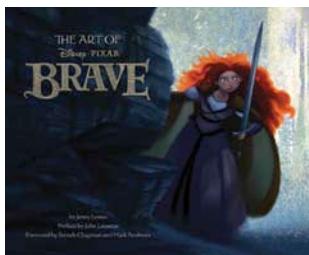
by Jenny Lerew (Chronicle Books, \$40) May 31

Prometheus: The Art of the Film

By Mark Salisbury (Titan Books, \$39.95) June 5

Disney Trivia From the Vault

By Dave Smith (Disney Editions, \$9.99) June 26



The Toy Story Films: An Animated Journey

By Charles Solomon (Disney Editions, \$60) Aug. 7

A Mary Blair Treasury of Golden Books

Various Authors (Golden Books, \$19.99) Aug. 7

A Disney Sketchbook

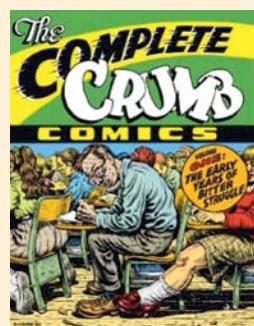
By Ken Shue (Chronicle Books, \$50) Oct. 9

The Complete Crumb Comics Vol. I: The Early Years of Bitter Struggle

By Robert Crumb

[Fantagraphics, \$24.99; Second Edition]

There's something about underground comics pioneer R. Crumb's outsider's perspective and utterly unpretentious, bittersweet storytelling that makes him instantly appealing to misunderstood artists and grumpy animators all over the world. That's why it's always cause for celebration when a new book celebrates the legacy of this truly American icon. Last month, the visionary editors at Fantagraphics brought back an out-of-print volume, which goes back to the artist's early years. The collection features a never-before-published, 60-page Arcade comic that goes back to May of 1962, and several early *Fritz the Cat* stories (which were known as *Animal Town Comics*) and the famous *Treasure Island Days*, which was featured in the Crumb movie. You also get several other strips and sketches and diary entries from 1958 through 1962—which is quite astounding given the fact that the artist was only in his late teens during this period. Read this book, then watch Ralph Bakshi's 1972 animated feature *Fritz the Cat* and be grateful that all of this great pop culture magic is out there for us to enjoy!



Following two award-winning movies **The girl who leapt through time** and **Summer Wars**,
comes a new animated feature film from **Mamoru HOSODA**

WOLF CHILDREN

AME & YUKI

Japanese theatrical release
July 21st, 2012

French theatrical release
August 29th, 2012

LES ENFANTS LOUPS
AME & YUKI



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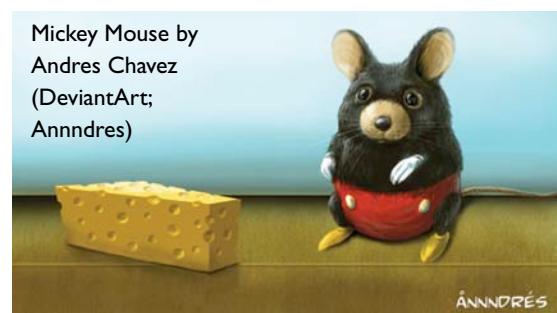
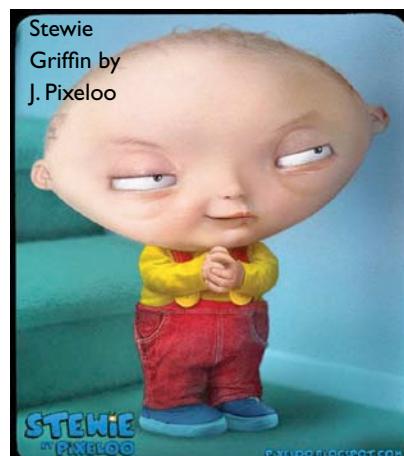
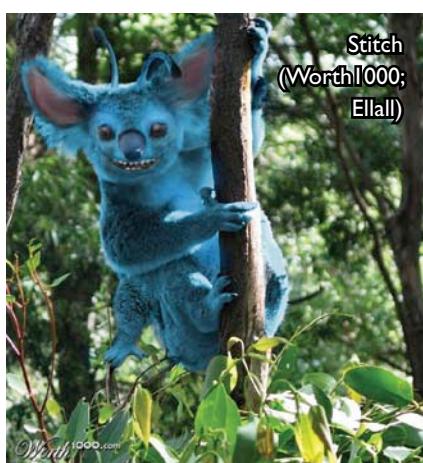
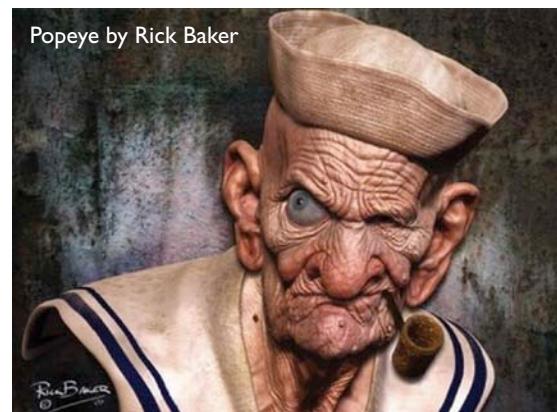
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When Toons Get Too Real

Thanks to the never-ending creativity of animation fans, we've noticed an abundance of photo-real depictions of favorite animated characters on the Internet. Here are some of our favorite additions to the mix, courtesy of Worth1000.com and various other creative hot spots on the web.





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FEATURES



Euro Dash

DreamWorks' delightful zoo buddies find some new European pals in the third chapter of the *Madagascar* trilogy. by Ramin Zahed

After the huge box office success of their first two movies, everybody knew Alex, Marty, Melman and Gloria were going to have more eye-popping adventures on the big screen. The lovable New York City zoo animals, who first rose to stardom in summer of 2005, are continuing their madcap trek around the world in DreamWorks Animation's summer treat *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*.

In this new outing, which is co-directed by Eric Darnell and Tom McGrath (who also led the first two *Madagascar* films) and Conrad Vernon (*Shrek 2*, *Monsters vs. Aliens*), the zoosters find themselves in Monte Carlo trailing the penguins and chimps who have pulled off a crazy casino heist. Soon, they are chased by the French animal control officer Captain Chantel DuBois (voiced by Frances

McDormand) and forced to hide in a third-rate traveling circus, where they meet new friends Vitaly the tiger (Bryan Cranston), Stefano the Italian sea lion (Martin Short) and Gia, the exotic Jaguar (Jessica Chastain).

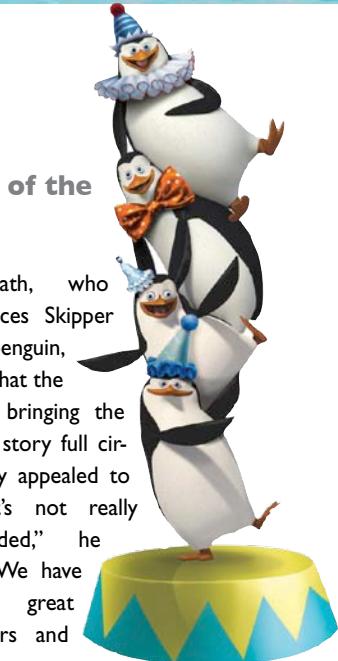
"I'm really happy with the epic quality that we have achieved," says DreamWorks veteran Vernon. "We follow these characters through some of the most dramatic places in Europe. We were inspired by those colorful Sean Connery *James Bond* movies. You are in five different, amazingly beautiful locations. Everything seems huge—Monte Carlo, Rome, the Swiss Alps, London—and then we have a great circus sequence that's visually mind-blowing, especially in 3-D."

Like the true professionals that they are, the helmers did plenty of research to prepare for the animals' European trek. "We looked at every

circus we could find, from tiny ones that travel up and down the state of California," reveals Darnell. "We spent time at the Casino in Monte Carlo and were stunned when they actually offered to let us see the casino roof, which we ended up putting in the movie. We even traveled to London, Rome and the Swiss Alps and took thousands of pictures to make sure that all our visuals would be authentic."

"We wanted to deliver the same style of animation as Tex Avery and Bob Clampett — the type of animation that has a broad and cartoony style and is more playful with the timing. It really took us eight years to get our chops up."

— *Madagascar 3* co-director Tom McGrath





the new additions to the cast, Vitaly, Stefano and Gia, all have storylines that are really relatable. Perhaps having a lion which has to fight his instinct to eat his zebra friend isn't as relatable as the material in our third film. Although the movie is a really wonderful worldwide adventure, the heart of it is about two groups meeting and getting along."

A couple of things to remember about the third go-around for the animals: CG animation has vastly improved in the past 10 years and this is the first time we get to see the gang in glorious 3-D. "The tools get better

and better," says McGrath. "We started working on the first film about 12 years ago. Back then, almost everyone wanted to do more realistic CG. What we wanted to do was deliver the same style of animation as Tex Avery and Bob Clampett, the type of animation that has a broad and cartoonish style and is more playful with the timing. It really took us eight years to get our chops up. Our animators can now do the same type of animation in CG as they were doing in those 2D classics from the '50s. You can definitely see it with the new characters, too. The new tools let us

move and distort them like never before."

McGrath says compared to what the technology can achieve these days, the early films have a certain videogame quality about them. "We can do so much more geometry and design work in CG today," he adds. "Back then we used to rely a lot more on matte painting. Computers are a lot faster, and we can move the camera all over the place."

Another reason for this new era of animation is because the artists have learned to use the old tools in new ways. "One of the examples in the

new movie is that we were using the animation software Primo, which is much more intuitive than the other tools we used before," says McGrath. "But more than that, our animators are the real secret ingredient. You just don't need to be a technical guy to move the characters around anymore. The tools are much easier and more convenient to use today."

Homage to Dumbo and Fantasia

Darnell says he loved the fact that they were able to get a lot of great action sequences, including a glorious car chase, in this third chapter. He also praises the pic's dazzling cinematography and production design. "We were looking at classics like the 'Pink Elephants on Parade' sequence from Disney's *Dumbo*," says the director. "We wanted the circus act in the third act to look more surreal and not be locked into reality. Yes, it's a cartoon, but there are always certain rules about what we can and can't do. In this case, we really pushed the limits of how we depicted that scene."

The three directors and the art



Eric Darnell



Tom McGrath



Conrad Vernon

New Circus Act: The original zoo quartet meets several new friends on their new Euro trek—Stefano the sea lion (Martin Short), Gia the jaguar (Jessica Chastain) and Vitaly the Siberian tiger (Bryan Cranston).



team, led by production designer Kendal Cronkhite and art director Shannon Jeffries, worked together to come up with outlandish ideas that they could really have fun with at the circus. "They delivered these beautiful paintings," recalls Vernon. "Then, we went from there and made them more spectacular and crazy. We really took it in a new direction when we figured out it needed to be really psychedelic. We really don't need to see the wires and the strings because we wanted to be more magical with this circus. Whenever I'm doing a storyboard, I lose myself in time and space. We wanted to convey this same notion with the animals. Things seem to turn upside down and they are floating around and doing impossible things."

The directors are also proud of the way they explored 3-D stereography to maximize the project's eye candy. "Because this was the first *Madagascar*

car film that was in 3-D, we went back and revisited the previous two, and we found out that there were so many scenes in them that would actually work beautifully in 3-D!" says Darnell. "It just came naturally through the style and tone of the film. A circus, of course, is a wonderful, natural way to get mileage out of the format. We also really took advantage of 3-D in the crazy action sequences."

Exploring New Horizons

As in any film trilogy, the writers and directors of the film got another chance to explore the characters' relationships and idiosyncrasies. "We didn't really want to go into this movie just because the last one was a huge international success," explains

Darnell. "We got the opportunity to really finish the story we set out to tell.

Since our friends left their home in New York City, we needed to get them to the zoo again. What's great about working with these characters for such a long time is that we just know what makes Alex tick or how the dynamics of their friendships

Madagascar Movies by the Numbers

Year	Title	U.S. Gross	Foreign Gross
2005	<i>Madagascar</i>	\$193.6 M	\$339.1 M
2008	<i>Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa</i>	\$180 M	\$423.9 M



Grand Villainess:
The great Frances McDormand provides the voice of the zoosters' number-one enemy, Captain Chantel DuBois, the head of animal control in Europe!



work. But you also get to delve deeper into the material."

McGrath totally agrees with his directing partner. "The story is always the biggest challenge, because we have four zoo animals and then the ensemble cast of all the additional animals, the chimps, the penguins and the new additions. You only have about 80 minutes to tell a story involving 25 or so characters, and you have to negotiate the screen time. It's a comedy, but you really have to find the heart of the story."

So what happens if this third installment is just as, or more, popular than the previous films? Will they come up with more adventures for the zoosters? "On the one hand, we really wrapped things up nicely in this one," confesses Darnell, "But if the movie does well and we come up with an amazing idea that takes advantage of these fantastic characters that people love, we'd be crazy not to go for it!"

.....
DreamWorks Animation's Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted premieres at the Cannes Film Festival in May. Paramount releases the film in U.S. theaters on June 8.

Please Play with the Animals!

In case you were looking for a more immersive experience with Alex, Marty, Gloria and Melman throughout the summer season, then you may want to check out D3Publisher's latest tie-in game *Madagascar 3: The Video Game*, which will be out on June 5.



The new release features single or two-player co-op modes which allow players to travel across Europe to promote the circus by completing off-the-wall missions given by the Penguins. It's all up to the player to perform some zany publicity stunts on some of Europe's big landmarks and entertain the crowds with some over-the-top, circus acts. In addition to the original four zoosters, the game includes King Julien, Maurice and Mort, the chimps Phil and Mason, the Penguins, and their new circus pals Stefano the sea lion, Vitaly the Siberian tiger and Gia the jaguar.

"The *Madagascar* franchise continues to be an important and successful global brand for us, and this video-game brings to life the film's *Madagascar*-style circus fun in a truly exciting and memorable gameplay experience that will thrill kids and families alike," says Chris Hewish, DreamWorks Animation's head of global interactive.

Madagascar 3: The Video Game for Wii, Xbox 360, and PlayStation 3 computer entertainment system is under development by Monkey Bar Games, a division of Vicious Cycle Software. *Madagascar 3: The Video Game* for Nintendo 3DS and DS, is under development by Torus Games.

FEATURES



Russian Animation on Ice

How Moscow studio Wizart Animation is updating the nation's CG industry with its first feature effort, *The Snow Queen*. by Mercedes Milligan

The worlds of fairy tales and animation are inextricably linked—from the earliest days of long-form animated film, fanciful tales from around the world have found new life through the freedom of artistry and suspension of disbelief inherent in the medium. Even as time and technology march on and live-action directors try their hand at reinventing the genre with eye-dazzling visual effects, it is hard to find a more winning combination than a well-known magical story and the storytelling magic of animation.

One of the most ambitious projects in the European animation scene right now is such a combination. Russia's Wizart Animation, with studios in Moscow and Voronezh, is putting the final touches on their stereoscopic 3-D CG take on *The Snow Queen*, based on the beloved story by Hans Christian Andersen. This first for the Russian animation industry is being co-produced by INLAY Film and has piqued international curiosity.

Conceived back in 2007, Wizart will unveil 45 minutes of the film at the Marché du Film in Cannes this month. The film follows an orphan girl named Gerda living in a chilled world under the influence of the evil Snow Queen, who has cooled the people's hearts. When her best friend Kai is mistakenly taken prisoner by the Snow Queen, Gerda sets out on a dangerous quest to free him and bring love and warmth back into the world.

"The Snow Queen story is one of my

favorites since childhood," shares writer/director Maxim Sveshnikov, who lists Disney's *The Lion King* and Pixar's *Finding Nemo* as his top toon influences. "Though it takes place in Denmark, it is close to our country and well-known in Russia because of a very famous Soviet [animated] adaptation of the fairy tale by Lev Atamanov. Nowadays, it is very difficult to get children to watch this old film, because we are living in a time of new technologies. But the story is full of beautiful moments and special magic, which appeal to viewers. So we tried to combine the magic atmosphere of an old story with modern influences for our feature."

A New Polish for an Old Treasure

When dealing with well-worn source material, especially a widely known fairy tale that has been in circulation since the 1800s, one of the greatest challenges is keeping the story recognizable while making sure your take stands out from countless other adaptations across many mediums.

When Sveshnikov and his fellow writers, his brother Vadim Sveshnikov and co-director Vlad Barbe, were first approached with the idea for a CG fairy tale and had decided upon *Snow Queen*, the director was keenly aware of this balancing act. "Before starting to work on this movie, I watched all previous versions of the story. There are a lot of them!" he notes that animated and live-

action features and TV series from multiple countries were all included in his research. While some stuck fast to the original story, and some went out on a limb, Sveshnikov confidently asserts that Wizart's take is different from any version audiences have seen before.

"[*The Snow Queen*] has modern dynamics. It will be a big adventure with friendship, love, chases, fights, characters' evolutions and magic," he elaborates. "You will see the change of elements—from winter to summer, from fire to water. Moreover, it is one of the first stories about the Snow Queen where we included stories of minor

characters, so you can discover new ones and better understand the Snow Queen's story—why she's willing to destroy creation and freeze people's hearts."

For Yuri Moskvin, who is a producer on the film with Sergey Rapoport and Alexander Ligay, offering a new interpretation of this rich classic had practical as well as aesthetic appeal. "As we are a Russian-based studio, it seems logical that we would start with Russian fairy tales—in fact, Russian 2D animation based on national myths and tales saw an increase lately. But from a producer's point of view, it is too risky to produce animation, which is quite expensive, and to limit its release only to the national market from the very beginning. So, we were targeting foreign release, too. *The Snow Queen* seems to be a perfect match in this regard: it is known abroad and it is loved in Russia."

Building Castles in the Snow

In striving for a film with what Moskvin describes as a fresh, modern and contemporary style that can compete in quality with the high standards of international audiences, Wizart set out to forge new paths and set new highs for the Russian animation industry. Produced with a budget of about \$7 million (U.S.), well below American toon blockbusters but quite high for Russia, *The Snow Queen's* animation team was



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built from the ground up and through trial and error had to find ways to emulate the successful films they admire from other parts of the world.

"The first barrier Wizart had to overcome was the lack of professionals; literally, as there is no established animation school and not so many projects produced, the entire workforce was grown in-house," Moskvin explains. "It was really a challenge, and we are glad that we've managed to build one of the best teams in the country, though there is still a lot to develop." He adds that another difficulty was the lack of similar projects in the country—but notes that this was no reason for the team to lower its standards.

Although some members of the crew had previous experience with animated feature service work at the studio, Moskvin says they had to learn on the go and find the best solutions to all

aspects of the process. A key problem was refining the character design and animation. "Though the story was good, we had to make it believable; to animate human and animal characters, to place them into fairy tale locations that at the same time had to be realistic. To make it more real we also paid attention to the details such as the textures of the snow, greenery, hair and fur, clothes and furniture. No one has ever done anything like this before in Russia."

Sveshnikov concurs that the main challenge of the production was a technological one in the still-developing Russian CG industry. "In our movie we have the biggest number of effects ever done in Russian CG animated movies," he notes. "Sometimes when you're watching the first episodes produced, you realize what kind of things could be improved, and you make it happen in the next scenes. For Wizart Animation

[Snow Queen] is the first step ... It will help us to make even more complicated projects, from a technical point of view, in the future." A variety of in-house solutions augmented the pipeline, which included Maya and other software.

The innovations the studio has developed in the production of Snow Queen are already showing potential for future projects. Moskvin notes in particular the hair effects utilized in the film. "When you watch foreign features you never think how difficult it is to produce hair effects, but modern animators set high standards in this area," the producer opines. "At the beginning we had a lot of problems with the texture of Gerda's hair. The first time we see Gerda in the movie, she is upside-down in a close-up. And when the episode was produced, the outcome was a lead character with a lifeless bunch on her head." To resolve the issue, a specialized team threw themselves at the problem, creating a dedicated hair and fur department. "It was a breakthrough—the whole feeling of the movie was transformed!"

These hair and fur texturing and dynamics breakthroughs will come in handy for the studio's next 3D feature project, Sheep 'n' Wolves set for 2014. The variety of creatures involved in the story will offer plenty of work for the studio's designated hair specialists.

Despite the steep learning curve, the interest the project has generated around the world proves Snow Queen has been well worth the effort. In addition to the added value of 3-D stereoscopy, Wizart produced an English dub track in Los Angeles to boost international appeal. After presenting at last year's American Film Market and opening sales this Feb-

ruary at the European Film Market,



Yuri Moskvin



Maxim Sveshnikov

Moskvin says he has received positive feedback from buyers in over 20 territories, some of whom have already signed deals. So far a North American distributor has not been tapped, but while the producer acknowledges it is a difficult market to break in to, he says they will continue pursuing the possibility. He is convinced that Snow Queen is the kind of touching story full of appealing characters—not to mention the stylish animation and modern 3-D effects—that can succeed on a global scale.

"At the beginning of production, we had so many critics and people thought that we wouldn't produce a single shot. But we did," Sveshnikov sums up. "Every scene we've made, every public discussion, every publication is proving that we're moving straight forward to our goal. We've improved technologies and become more professional since we started. And now we are happy to present our feature to the international market, and really hope that the story we're telling will catch the attentions of families around the world."

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See footage from The Snow Queen at the Cannes Marché du Film; delivery is set for winter 2012-13. For more information, visit wizartanimation.com or thesnowqueenfilm.com.



A Cool Classic:

Wizart hopes the timeless charm of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen* will attract audiences in Russia and abroad.



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Carnival of the Animals: The new CG-animated Indian feature *Delhi Safari*, directed by Nikhil Advani, centers on a group of animals who travel to the city to save their land from urban builders.

Indie Champion

Fantastic Films brings a pair of crowd-pleasing CG-animated movies to the Cannes market this year.

Producing and distributing independent animated features for the global market is not for everyone. You have to know the business, be able to evaluate a project's commercial potential and prepare a movie for a global audience. Just ask Fred deWysocki, the tenacious and seasoned producer whose company Fantastic Films International has brought titles such as *Thru the Moebius Strip*, *The Living Forest*, *Spirit of the Forest* and *Agent Crush* to numerous territories over the past few years.

deWysocki and Fantastic president Roxane Barbat will have a strong presence at the Cannes Film Market this year with two interesting and very different animated features.

The first pic is *Delhi Safari*, a stereoscopic 3-D feature from Krayon Pictures of Pune, India, directed by Nikhil Advani. It follows the adventures of a group of animals in a once-protected reserve in India, who are being threatened by urbanization. Sultan the leopard, Bagga the bear, Bajrangi the hot-tempered monkey and Alex an obstinate parrot are some of the colorful players in this road picture, which finds the animals on a trek to Delhi to plead their case in front of the government. The top-notch voice cast includes Cary Elwes, Brad Garrett, Christopher Lloyd, Jane Lynch, Vanessa Williams and

Jason Alexander. *Delhi Safari* has also received special support from PETA for its environmental message and a storyline that centers on protecting animals in their natural habitat.

"We liked everything about this film," says deWysocki. "It has a great heart and message, has some great music and great dancing in the classic Bollywood tradition. We also think the property can turn into a bigger franchise. In the sequel, animals in other countries ask for their help. We're planning the sequel, which will be called *Beijing Safari*, with partners in China."

Fantastic Films delivered the English adaptation of the film in Los Angeles last year and put the finishing touches to the project earlier in 2012. deWysocki believes that the film is able to really hit the core demographic of animated family film. "In many ways, it's similar to movies like *Madagascar* or *Rio*. You look at the poster and you can really get it. It has some memorable animal characters and a really strong storyline. We are in discussion with major studios to bring it to the U.S. as well."

After winning the Best Animated Feature award at the FICCI Frames confab in India, the movie will be ready to make a splash at the Cannes Film Market this month, and will also unspool at the Annecy Animation Festival

in June. deWysocki sees a big future for the *Delhi Safari* gang. "We can really have these animals visit different countries and cities in every movie. Of course, we'll introduce new characters for every chapter."

Also on Fantastic Films' slate this year is a stereoscopic CG-animated feature called *Z-BAW*, which is produced by Mexican studio Imagination Films. Set in

a distant galaxy, the movie follows the adventures of a team of underdog heroes who plan to win a challenging intergalactic Z-BAW (a futuristic game which is a cross between hockey and soccer) tournament and save their planet from the evil ZAX and Niurax Corporation. Directed by Ricardo Gómez, the film was released in Mexico last month through a new partnership with produc-





tion company Candy Box.

"You have an evil corporation that is trying to steal the trophies and a ragtag team that stands in their way of ruling the world," says the producer. "It's a really fun adventure. When it opened in Mexico, it was the top animated feature of the week."

One of the important aspects of the global toon business is when to get in-

volved with a project. As a rule, Fantastic Films likes to tackle a feature as early in the development game as possible. "The earlier we get involved the better," says deWysocki. "Sometimes to get proper distribution comes down to what type of work we do with the voices and the adaptations. We can start our sales process with our distributors at those early stages. Script changes,

voiceover cast, edit choices—you can address all these issues early on in the game and make it easier for distributors to pick up the title sooner."

Since many countries provide government subsidies for animation production, many producers create films that are too regional for global audiences. "That has been one of our challenges in recent years," says deWysocki. "These films are written to emphasize local folklore, culture and elements. We need storylines and characters that are universally appealing and transcend cultural and national borders—just like the best films of Pixar and DreamWorks. As it's often been said, it all comes down to the story. We don't just work with the companies to sell their films, we also exec produce. We can maximize the return and the sales cycle for these films."

In addition to *Delhi Safari* and *ZBAW*, Fantastic Films is also working



Wild Things: Fred deWysocki and Roxane Barbat with actor Brad Garrett during a *Delhi Safari* recording session.

on two more stereoscopic films with Imagination: *Alley of Dreams*, a holiday-themed period movie which is slated to be completed by the end of 2012, and *Papagiorgio the Great*, a circus animal feature

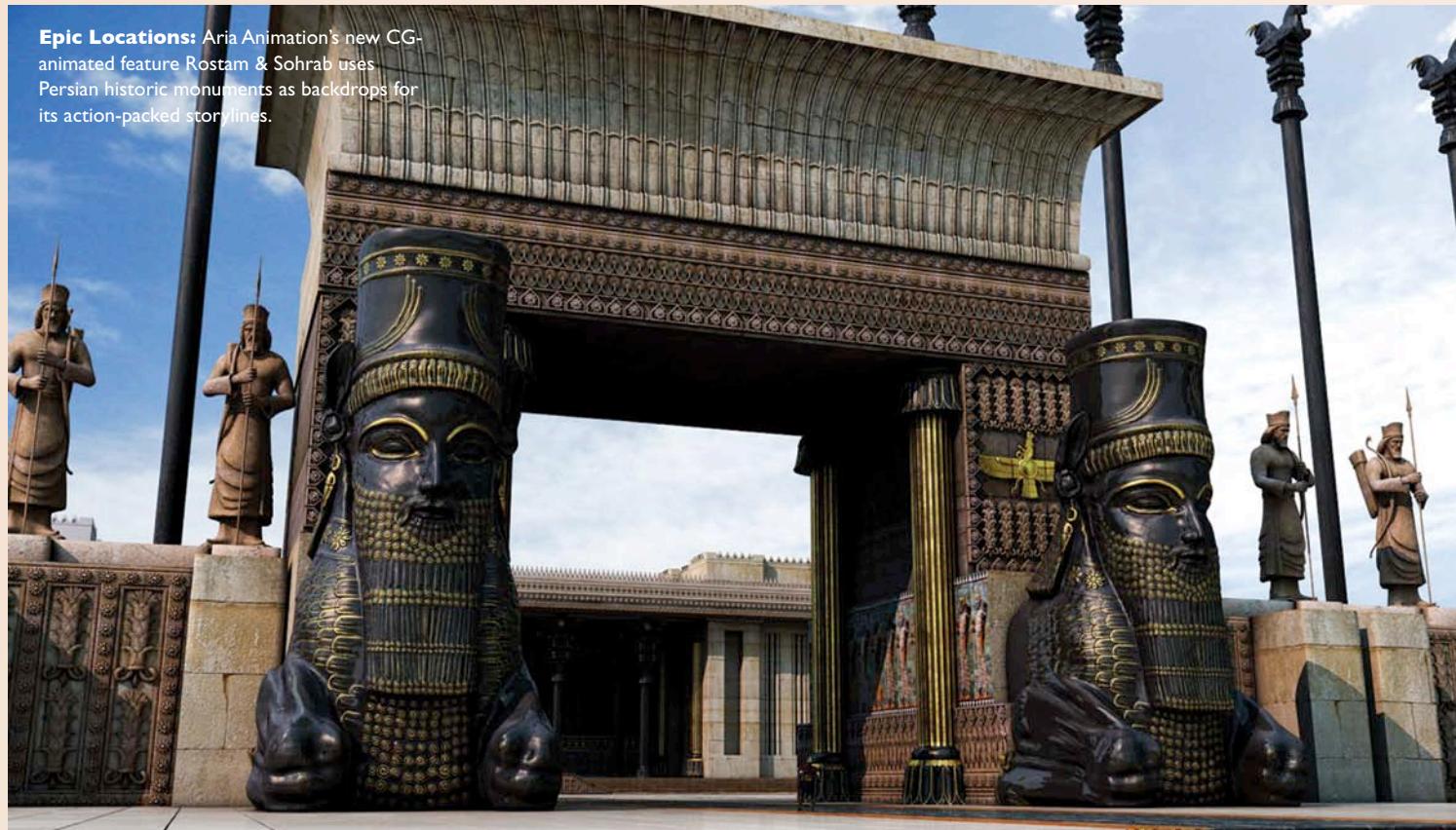
which should ready in 2013. As all this activity seems to indicate, the next few years are going to be a busy period for the L.A.-based producer.

"Interest in animation has been growing ever year," he points out. "It has always been a hot commodity, because in many ways, it's a recession-proof business. Audiences continue to demand titles that the whole family can watch together. In many ways, these movies can be the additional babysitter at home."

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Visit
fantasticfilmsinternational.com
for more information.



Epic Locations: Aria Animation's new CG-animated feature *Rostam & Sohrab* uses Persian historic monuments as backdrops for its action-packed storylines.



Building a 3-D Persian Epic

Shahnameh, the classic 11th century work by Persian poet Ferdowsi, inspires the new 3D animated movie *Rostam & Sohrab*.

More than 10 centuries ago, the acclaimed Iranian poet Ferdowsi (940-1020 A.D.), wrote an epic 60,000-verse poem called the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), which offered a mythological look at the history of the Persian empire until the 7th century Muslim conquest of the region. This year, thanks to the hard work of a talented team of Iranian animators, international audiences will be able to enjoy a CG-animated movie based on one of the key chapters of the book, titled *Rostam & Sohrab*. The patriotic tale centers on the hero Sohrab's quest to be reunited with his absent father, Rostam. Because of an evil plan hatched by their mutual enemy Afrasiab, the father and son end up battling each other, without knowing each other's

true identities.

The film is directed by Kianoush

Dalvand and produced by his brother Daryoush. To make it even more of a family affair, the art director and tech director are their brothers Farzad Dalvand and Kourosh Dalvand! They began work on the project more than five years ago and approached the source material with great sensitivity and care, since Ferdowsi's work is so highly regarded by Iranians.

More than a hundred people

worked on the animated project, which is produced by Aria Animation Co., located in the city of Boroujerd, in western Iran. (Recently, the city was officially recognized as the capital city of Persian animation.) With an estimated budget of \$3.5 million, the film is aimed at a wide audience and has changed the poem's original tragic ending to appeal to today's family audiences.

"Although we were loyal to the





Daryoush Dalvand



Farzad Dalvand



Kianoush Dalvand



Kourosh Dalvand

original story, we changed some parts of it and added more humor and fantastic details," says the director, Kianoush Dalvand. "Thanks to our Hollywood consultants Scott T.J. Frank and Melissa Carter, we changed the tragic nature of the original tale. We were also happy to use the music by Eliza Ip, which is influenced by Persian melodies and adapted for global audiences."

Dalvand also points out that the film includes some very exciting action sequences which incorporate classic Persian wrestling techniques as the combat basis. "The action scenes are really incredible to watch," says the director. "We also worked hard to make sure that the dialogue was funny and had something for both children and their parents."

Fans of classic Persian architecture will also be happy to know that many of *Rostam & Sohrab*'s backdrops are based on authentic locations and famous monuments in the

country. "Since the movie is based on one of the greatest Persian myths, we decided to use Persepolis, Bam and many of our country's other famous monuments as the basis of our conceptual design. For example, we built a complete CG version of Persepolis and used it as

"Since the movie is based on one of the greatest Persian myths, we decided to use Persepolis, Bam and many of our country's other famous monuments as the basis for our conceptual design."

the palace of Kayavoos (King of Persia) in the movie."

The team at Aria Animation used their mo-cap studio to get the initial draft of the action. Then, they added months of labor-intensive animation to keep the integrity of the character design and create believable motion cycles for the cast of characters. Aria also used its facial capture system to enhance the facial expressions in the movie.

Interestingly enough, the four

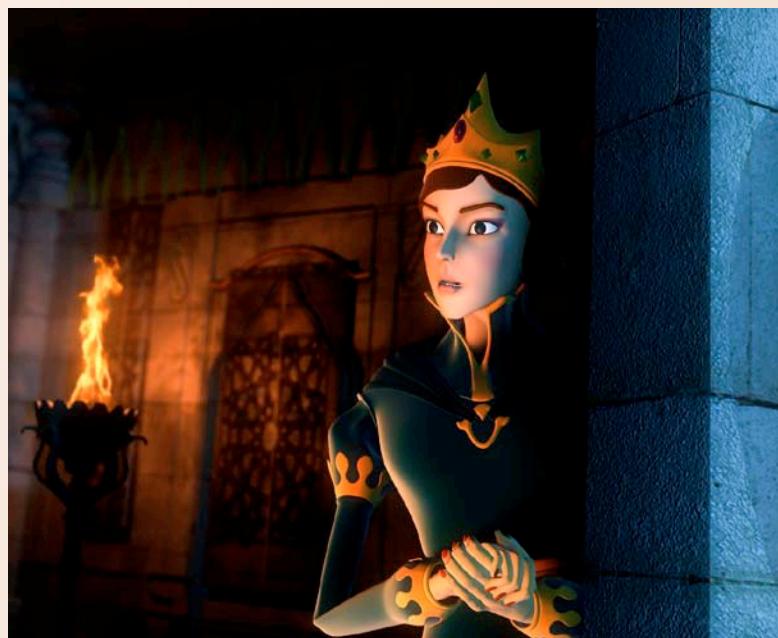
brothers involved in the production of the movie have had little formal training in animation, having studied geology, electronics and engineering in college. Animation was simply a passion that they each pursued after graduating in other technical areas.

creative and technical individuals."

Now that work on the feature has been completed, the Dalvand brothers are hoping to have a productive and fruitful summer, selling the movie in festivals and preparing it for release in various territories. "This is the first Iranian CG-animated movie made with a real international audience in mind," he says.

"We are hoping that the film will be well received both in Iran and overseas. We may release the movie before the summer in Iran, but the plans depend on how the sales go internationally. We have to adjust our domestic sales for other territories. Because of this, we may delay the domestic release a few months."

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Aria Animation's *Rostam & Sohrab* will be available at the Cannes Film Market this month at Riviera Stand F13/G10. For more info visit www.ariaco.net or e-mail darioosh@yahoo.com.





While it can be a dizzying feat trying to keep up with all the animated features around the globe in their various stages of development, production and funding crises, we do our best to keep you up to date on the most talked about upcoming toon flicks. Here's a glimpse of what the rest of the 2012 (and the near future) animated theatrical release landscape looks like!

Toys in the Attic

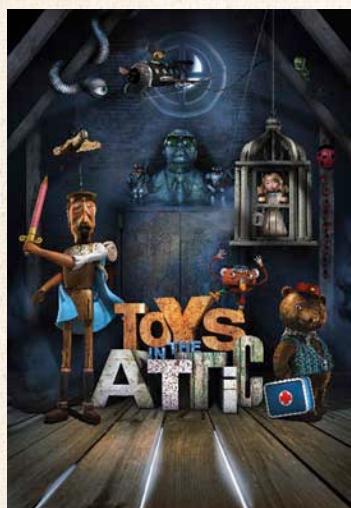
Bio Illusion, April 6

Director: Jiri Barta; Vivian Schilling [English version]

Written by: Jiri Barta, Edgar Dutka; Vivian Schilling [Eng.]

Starring: Forest Whitaker, Joan Cusack, Cary Elwes [Eng.]

Story: Reflecting the turmoil of Cold War era Czech life, the attic is divided into the land of happy toys in the West and the evil side of the East, ruled by the wicked Head of State. When the despot kidnaps the lovely



Buttercup, a teddy bear (Whitaker), mechanical mouse (Cusack) and marionette (Elwes) form a rag-tag rescue trio.

The Buzz: The second feature effort by acclaimed stop-motion animation director Barta has been picked up for U.S. release by Hannover House following its international festival success since premiering in the Czech Republic in 2009. While it has taken home honors in children's competitions—including the New York International Children's Film Festival, Sitges and Anima Basauri—some critics have questioned whether the sinister tone is really kid-appropriate. A scare is possible, but enjoyment of the hand-crafted character and effects animation is guaranteed.

A Letter To Momo

Production I.G, April 21 (Japan)

Director: Hiroyuki Okiura

Written by: Hiroyuki Okiura

Starring: Karen Miyama, Yuka, Toshiyuki Nishida

Story: A 13-year-old girl named Momo is haunted by the possibilities of an unfinished letter left behind by her late father, which simply reads "Dear Momo." In the wake of his death, she moves with her mother to a remote island where strange supernatural things begin occurring around her, which she suspects are connected to the incomplete message from her father.

The Buzz: Fans of Japanese animation will be eager to catch this latest work from Okiura, who directed the

ANIMATED MOVIE DOSSIER 2012



acclaimed post-apocalyptic actioner *Jin Roh: The Wolf Brigade*. The original concept took Okiura roughly seven years to bring to fruition, and Production I.G has delivered it in gentle but stunning traditional animation. The film premiered last year at the Toronto International Film Festival and recently had its U.S. debut at the New York International Children's Film Festival. NYICFF organizers GKIDS are planning for a wider U.S. release late this year.

Extraordinary Tales

Melusine Prod., The Big Farm, R&R Comm., Les Amateurs; Summer 2012 (Europe)

rope)

Director: Raul Garcia

Written by: Based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe

Starring: Bela Lugosi, Christopher Lee

Story: Tales from the Victorian horror master set to be tackled include "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar," "The Pit and the Pendulum" and "The Mask of the Red Death."

The Buzz: The much-anticipated feature build-on to Garcia's 2005 black and white short *The Tell-Tale Heart* (with audio from an old Lugosi radio performance) will see each of



the five Poe stories representing a different animation style; "Usher" (narrated by Lee) will channel expressionist painter Edvard Munch while "Valdemar" draws on American comic books from the '40s and '50s. Big Farm's Digital Graphics and Luxembourg-based Studio 352 provide animation, while Arnaud Demuynck's Les Films du Nord oversees artistic production. The work in progress drew a lot of attention when it debuted at last year's Cartoon Movie event.

Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted

DreamWorks, June 8

Directors: Eric Darnell, Tom McGrath, Conrad Vernon

Written by: Eric Darnell, Noah Baumbach



Starring: Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, David Schwimmer, Jada Pinkett-Smith, Sacha Baron Cohen, Frances McDormand, Cedric the Entertainer, Andy Richter, Martin Short, Jessica Chastain, Bryan Cranston, John DiMaggio, Christopher Knights, Chris Miller, Tom McGrath

Story: On the road to New York again, the hapless zoo animals end up stranded once more when their plan goes awry—despite the mechanical know-how of the chimps and penguins. This time, they land in Monte Carlo, where they try to evade animal control by joining up with a travelling circus, meeting new friends and touring a series of European cities.

The Buzz: See our Feature story on page 12.

Brave

Disney-Pixar, June 22

Director: Mark Andrews

Written by: Brenda Chapman, Irene Mecchi

Starring: Kelly Macdonald, Julie



Walters, Billy Connolly, Emma Thompson, Kevin McKidd, Craig Ferguson, Robbie Coltrane, John Ratzenberger

Story: Adventurous, impetuous Merida (Macdonald) is the daughter of King Fergus (Connolly) and Queen Elinor (Thompson), but rather than play the perfect princess, she shuns an ancient custom and forges a path for herself. But she learns that her decisions have consequences for herself, her family and her kingdom.

The Buzz: See our Feature story in the June issue for an in-depth look at this stereoscopic 3-D adventure.

Ice Age: Continental Drift

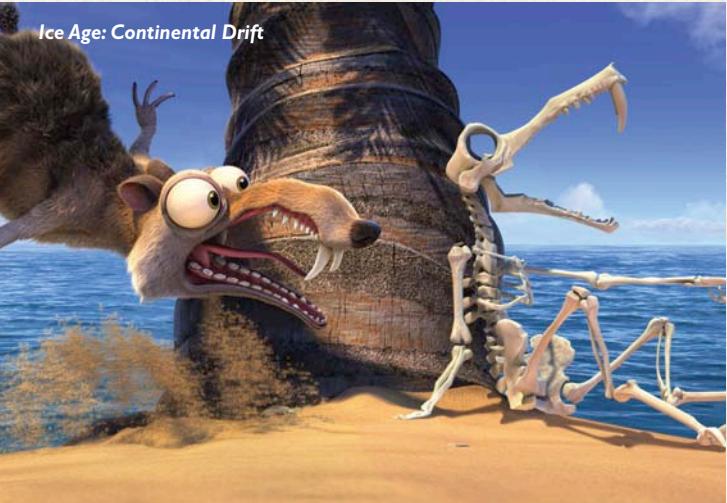
Fox, Blue Sky; July 13

Directors: Steve Martino, Mike Thurmeier

Written by: Michael Berg, Jason Fuchs, Mike Reiss

Starring: Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Denis Leary, Queen Latifah, Seann William Scott, Josh Peck, Jennifer Lopez, Chris Wedge, Keke Palmer, Drake, Peter Dinklage, Aziz Ansari, Wanda Sykes, Nicki Minaj

Story: Set a few years after *Dawn of the Dinosaurs*, that squirrely Scrat's quest for his precious acorn sets world-changing events into action and sends the *Ice Age* crew on an adventure that will reunite Sid (Leguiza-



mo) with his family, let Diego (Leary) find love, and pit the furry pals against a band of nefarious pirates.

The Buzz: This fourth flick in the franchise has some industry watchers wondering just how much longer Fox will be able to keep it up—although the Scrat-centric trailer has generated a lot of positive feedback from fans of the scrappy critter. Fans can expect some real animation spectacles, especially with the stereo 3-D elements, and the super hot voice cast is sure to deliver on the comedy angle. All in all, *Drift* seems set to surpass *Dinosaurs*' nearly \$900 million global BO earnings.

Wolf Children (Okami Kodomomo no Ame to Yuki)

Studio Chizu, Madhouse, TOHO; July 21 (Japan)

Director: Mamoru Hosoda

Written by: Mamoru Hosoda, Satoko Okudera

Starring: Aoi Miyazaki, Takao Osawa

Story: Hana is a 19-year-old college student who falls in love with a "wolf-man." Over the film's 13 year story arc, the couple have two partially wolf children, Ame and Yuki. The family lives in the city struggling to hide their strange traits, but when the wolf-man dies unexpectedly Hana moves her children to a more rural area.

The Buzz: Hosoda, the acclaimed director behind global hits *Summer Wars* and *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time*, is sure to deliver another beautiful traditionally animated Japanese neo-classic, thanks to the team at his toon house Studio Chizu. Trailers for the sweet if non-traditional family flick have made the rounds online,



SECRET

raising hopes that a U.S. distributor will nab *Wolf Children* should it prove another box office success for Hosoda in Japan. The film has also inspired a manga which began running in *Young Ace* magazine in April.

Cinderella: Once Upon a Time in the West
Herold and Family, Nexus



Productions; July 25 (France)

Director: Pascal Hérold

Written by: Pascal Hérold

Starring: Alexandra Lamy, Yolande Moreau, Isabelle Nanty

Story: Cinderella is a tomboyish deer girl living in the rough and tumble Wild West. After losing her tooth in a bar brawl, she finds herself tasked with rescuing a visiting Russian prince from a band of wicked simian pirates.

The Buzz: Animated by Delecav Studios in their proprietary blend of motion-capture and key-framed 3-D CG, *Cinderella* looks poised to surpass the international success of Hérold's previous animated efforts like *The True Story of Puss 'n Boots*. It remains to be seen whether the American setting will generate demand for U.S. distribution of the film, which is being completed with a roughly 11 million euro (about \$14.5 million U.S.) budget.

Sammy's Adventure 2: Escape from Paradise

nWave Pictures, Paradis Films, Eagle Pictures; August 1 (Belgium)

Directors: Ben Stassen, Vincent Kesteloot

Written by: Domonic Paris

Starring: Billy Unger, Melanie Griffith, Isabelle Fuhrman

Story: Sammy and Ray, sea turtles and BFFs, are caught by poachers while escorting the hatchlings Ricky and Ella out to sea. Finding themselves in a marvelous aquarium in Dubai, the turtles are enlisted by Big D the seahorse to help with his escape plot, but decide on formulating a plan of their own with the help of

various new aquatic friends. Meanwhile, Ricky and Ella mount a daring rescue attempt.

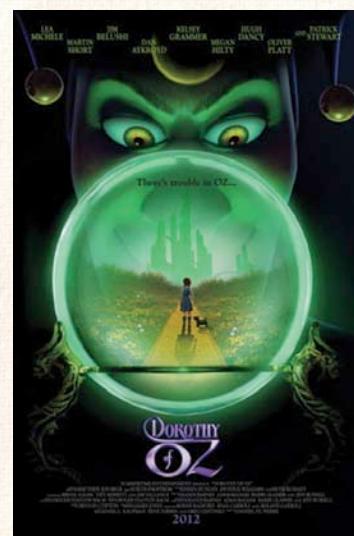
The Buzz: The sequel to Stassen's oceanic adventure will again be presented in vibrant 3-D stereoscopic CG animation, courtesy of Belgium's nWave and L.A.-based Illuminata Pictures, who worked on the first *Sammy* as well as Stassen's 3-D bugs-in-space flick *Fly Me to the Moon*. The

Sammy's Adventure 2: Escape from Paradise



film promises to blend colorful characters, lush underwater worlds and the thrilling escapades of film classic *The Great Escape* into a family-friendly summer treat.

Dorothy of Oz
Summertime Entertainment,



August 3

Directors: Will Finn, Dan St. Pierre

Written by: Adam Balsam, Barry Glasser; Randi Barnes [Story]

Starring: Lea Michele, Dan Aykroyd, Kelsey Grammer, James Belushi, Hugh Dancy, Megan Hilty, Patrick Stewart, Martin Short

Story: Hapless adventurer Dorothy (Michele) returns to Kansas only to find it devastated. Returning to Oz, she finds her old friends Scarecrow (Aykroyd), Tin Man (Grammer) and Cowardly Lion (Belushi) and the entire realm are in peril. Meeting new friends along the way, the heroes of Oz join forces to stop a wicked Jester (Short) and his evil plot to rule the

magical world.

The Buzz: Based on the book by Roger S. Baum (a descendant of Oz creator L. Frank Baum), this indie effort will bring the beloved characters to life in IMAX 3D-ready CG animation. Early release design pieces from the film's concept artist Seth Engstrom (*Avatar*, *Alice in Wonderland*) show an ambitious project full of carefully crafted detail with an eye toward maintaining a connection to previous takes on Oz with a fresh look at the now familiar characters and scenes of this well loved property. Directors St. Pierre and Finn both come from extensive art department backgrounds, primarily Disney feature and TV animation.

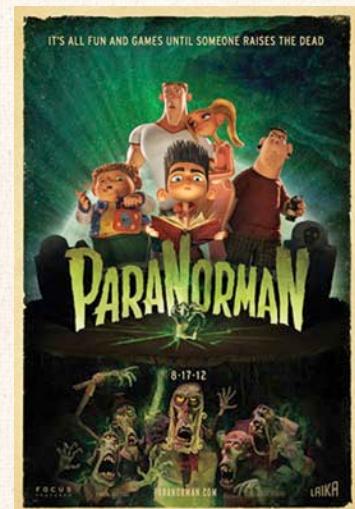
ParaNorman

Laika, Focus Features; August 17

Directors: Chris Butler, Sam Fell

Written by: Chris Butler

Starring: Kodi Smit-McPhee, Casey Affleck, John Goodman, Tempe



Bledsoe, Jeff Garlin, Bernard Hill, Anna Kendrick, Leslie Mann, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, Elaine Stritch, Tucker Albrizzi

Story: Norman (Smit-McPhee) is a misunderstood kid with a strange ability: he can speak to the dead. Though outcast by his peers, Norman soon learns to embrace his differences when his sleepy New England town of Blithe Hollow comes under siege by the undead, raised by an ancient curse that only Norman has the power to reverse.

The Buzz: The incredible Laika

team that delivered Henry Selick's 2009 hit *Coraline* offer up another lovingly crafted stereo 3-D stop-motion effort, this time from an original story by Butler, who directs for the first time after doing storyboard duties for *Coraline* and Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride*. Fell's animation credits include *The Tale of Despereaux* and *Flushed Away*. The spooky tale is said to blend elements of campy horror and '80s classics like *The Goonies* which should appeal to older audiences as well as kids eager for a different kind of comedy adventure.

The Suicide Shop (Le Magasin des Suicides)

ARP Sélection, Caramel Film, Diabolo Films, Entre Chien et Loup, Kaibou Prod., La Petite Reine; September 26 (France)

Director: Patrice Leconte

Written by: Patrice Leconte; John Teulé [Story]

Story: Set in a dystopian version of the present day, the story occurs in a grim city where life is so unbearable that the inhabitants are constantly offing themselves. One family remains relatively upbeat though: the prosperous Tuvaches, operators of The Suicide Shop—a dismal retailer that specializes in the accessories of self destruction. Their means of living becomes threatened with the birth of their youngest, Alan, a baby with such inborn zeal for life that he begins to change the dire outlooks of the townspeople.

The Buzz: Based on the curious novel by French author John Teulé, the noirish 2D animation blends traditional artistry with CG techniques.

Director Leconte, best known State-side for his live-action works like *Girl on the Bridge* and *Intimate Strangers*, is also a noted cartoonist whose works appeared in *Pilote* magazine. The dark comedy elements have certainly raised a buzz online; unfortunately the premiere date was recently pushed back from a Spring release so the curious have a bit longer to wait.

Hotel Transylvania

Sony Pictures Animation, September 28

Director: Genndy Tartakovsky

Written by: Dan Hageman, Kevin Hageman, David Feiss

Starring: Adam Sandler, Selena Gomez, Andy Samberg, Kevin James, Fran Drescher, David Koechner, Cee Lo Green, Steve Buscemi, Molly Shannon, David Spade

Story: When Dracula (Sandler), the proprietor of the monster world's swankiest resort Hotel Transylvania, invites the cream of the creature crop to celebrate his daughter Mavis's (Gomez) birthday, he bites off more than he can chew when a human traveler (Samberg) shows up and catches the young vamp's eye.

The Buzz: The long-awaited and much tossed about *Romeo & Juliet* meets Hollywood horror spoof has been heading full steam for theaters ever since fifth and final (one hopes) director Tartakovsky (*Star Wars: Clone Wars*, *Samurai Jack*) came on-board last year. The all-star cast, friendly-looking fiend designs (which have been appearing online rather steadily as part of the ramp up) and season-appropriate spookiness should help this stereo 3-D CG effort finally pay off.



Frankenweenie

Walt Disney Pictures, Tim Burton Prod.; October 5



Director: Tim Burton

Written by: John August; Tim Burton; Leonard Rippy [Story]

Starring: Charlie Tahan, Winona Ryder, Catherine O'Hara, Martin Landau, Martin Short, Robert Capron, Atticus Shaffer, Tom Kenny

Story: Devastated by the death of his beloved dog, Sparky, young Victor Frankenstein (Tahan) harnesses the power of science to bring his best friend back to life. Despite the boy's best efforts to keep him hidden, the reanimated Sparky gets loose and creates havoc in the town.

The Buzz: Burton fans have been chomping at the bit to see this feature take on the master of toon horror's 1984 live-action short. Burton stays true to his roots by crafting his tale of canine terror with stop-motion animation and shooting it in black and white—making the film a double first for its planned IMAX 3D release. Some say Disney is taking a gamble with this quirky approach, but as Oscar winner *The Artist* proved, sometimes a little vintage flare is just what theatergoers crave.

The Boy with the Cuckoo-Clock Heart

EuropaCorp, October 17 (France)

Directors: Stéphane Berla, Mathias



SECRET

Malzieu
Written by: Mathias Malzieu
Starring:

Jean Rochefort, Rossy de Palma, Olivia Ruiz

Story: On the day Jack is born in Scotland in 1874, it is so terribly cold that his heart stops beating. A resourceful midwife replaces his heart with a clock, allowing him to live. But as Jack grows up he learns he must avoid any excitement as it affects his mechanical heart—and he realizes he can never fall in love because such strong emotion would be the end of him.

The Buzz: Chalk another one up in the "hooray, stop-motion is back" column! This steam-punk influenced 3-D adaptation is based on a concept album by French rockers Dionysos, "La Mécanique du cœur," and illustrated novel of the same name written by band vocalist Malzieu. Co-director Berla has created music videos and clips for the band. Luc Besson will be producing with Virginie Silla.

Wreck-It Ralph

Disney, November 2

Director: Rich Moore

Starring: John C. Reilly, Jack McBrayer, Jane Lynch, Sarah Silverman, Jamie Elman

Story: Wreck-It Ralph (Reilly) is the destructive villain of the *Fix-It Felix Jr.* videogame who longs to prove he is really a hero at heart. Escaping the confines of his arcade machine, he journeys to neighboring games and meets new characters in each distinct world. When he comes to the racing game *Sugar Rush*, however, Vanellope (Silverman) reveals there is a great threat to her game and the whole arcade, which Ralph may have unwittingly caused.



tingly caused.

The Buzz: Exec producer and studio COO John Lasseter describes Ralph as "an 8-bit videogame bad guy who travels the length of the arcade to prove he's a good guy." Revealed concept art implies fans can expect cameos from favorite videogame characters from franchises like Super Mario, Sonic the Hedgehog, Street Fighter, Mega Man and Pac-Man. The revitalization of this concept, which underwent a few production stop-and-goes over the last several years, seems to usher in a new non-traditional era of Disney animation.

Niko 2: Family Affairs

Cinemaker, A. Film, Magma Films, Ulysses Filmproduktion; November 15 (Germany)

Directors: Kari Juusonen, Jørgen Lerdam

Written by: Hannu Tuomainen,



Marteinn Thorisson

Story: With Christmas fast approaching, Niko the reindeer must cope with his mother getting re-married and the new task of looking after a little step-brother.

The Buzz: A sequel to Finland's break-out CG animated feature success of 2008, *Niko and the Way to the Stars* (a.k.a. *The Flight Before Christmas*), this second outing is already booked to make appearances across Europe, thanks in no small part to its well-funded multinational production strategy. Roll-outs in France, Belgium, Denmark and Nordic territories will follow the German debut but so far no North American version release has been announced.

Rise of the Guardians

DreamWorks, November 21

Directors: Peter Ramsey, William



Joyce

Written by: David Lindsay-Abaire, William Joyce [Story]

Starring: Chris Pine, Isla Fisher, Hugh Jackman, Alec Baldwin, Jude Law, Dakota Goyo

Story: A group of not-so-fictional childhood icons comprised of Santa Claus (Baldwin), Easter Bunny (Jackman), Jack Frost (Pine), the Tooth Fairy (Fisher) and the Sandman must band together to stop the Boogeyman (Law) from bringing the world into total darkness by inspiring fear in the imaginations of the world's children.

The Buzz: Based on the books by Joyce (whose works also inspired *Rollie Polie Ollie*, *Robots* and *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*), the 3-D CG epic puts quirky new spins on the familiar fantasy characters. Guillermo Del Toro is co-executive producing and looks to have lent his signature taste for the dark and bizarre to this nontraditional fairy tale adventure. The recently unveiled trailer raised eyebrows in the blogosphere—especially Baldwin's kick-butt, tatted, Russian-accented Santa!

Ernest and Celestine

Les Armateurs, Maybe Moves, La Parti, Melusine, Studio Canal; December 12 (France)

Directors: Stéphane Aubier, Vincent Patar, Benjamin Renner

Written by: Gabriel Vincent

Story: The tale of a friendship between Ernest the Bear who wants to be an artist and Celestine the Mouse, who doesn't want to be a dentist.

The Buzz: There's a lot of positive word-of-mouth about this stylish 2D animated project, which was selected to premiere at Cannes by the Festi-

val's prestigious Directors this year. The producer is none other than Didier Brunner (*The Secret of Kells*, *Kirikou and the Wild Beasts*, *The Triplets of Belleville*), co-directors Aubier and Patar were behind *A Town Called Panic* and Renner led the award-winning



short *A Mouse's Tale*. After dazzling the Cannes audience, the film will impress more animation fans at the Annecy Festival in June.

2012 TBA

Evangelion 3.0: You Can (Not) Redo

Studio Khara (Japan)

Directors: Hideaki Anno, Kazuya Tsurumaki



Written by: Hideaki Anno
Story: The third film installment of the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* universe rebuild will feature more giant robo action and the assembling of the "children chosen by fate."

Foosball
Film Factory Ent. (Spain/Argentina)
Director: Juan José Campanella
Written by: Juan José Campanella;



Roberto Fontanarrosa [Story]
Story: Amadeo, a shy but talented boy, enlists the help of a tabletop foosball game's plastic players come to life in order to face his arch rival Champ on the soccer field and regain his dignity. *Despicable Me* concept creator Sergio Pablos serves as animation supervisor.

Gladiators of Rome
Rainbow S.r.l. (Italy)
Director: Iginio Straffi
Written by: Michael J. Wilson
Story: Set in the days of ancient Rome, Timo is a young man orphaned by the volcanic eruption at Pompeii and raised by a general at the Gladiators Academy—but Timo is not exactly gladiator material. However, when a lovely girl catches his eye, he determines to do whatever it takes to be the fiercest fighter Rome has ever



seen in order to win her heart.

Heart String Marionette

M dot Strange
Director: M dot Strange
Written by: M dot Strange

Story: A child, a samurai mime and a stripper join forces to stop the "Wor Lord" and an evil clown who have



turned the land into a living nightmare rife with monsters. The independently produced animated ode to death and destruction from self titled "uberector" M dot Strange (We Are the Strange) features music by Endika.

A Liar's Autobiography

Monty Python, Bill & Ben Prod.

Directors: Bill Jones, Jeff Simpson, Ben Timlett

Written by: Graham Chapman

Starring: Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Jones, Terry Gilliam, Michael Palin

Story: Based on the inaccurate autobiography written by Chapman in 1980, numerous studios will contribute to the 3-D animated film which tells the made-up story of the Monty Python performer's life in a variety of styles. Studios include: Asylum Films, Not To Scale, Treat Studios, Peepshow, Steven Lall, Made Visual Studio, Sher-

bet, Superfad, Mr & Mrs Smith, Trunk, Cake, Arthur Cox, A for Animation, Tundra and Beakus.

Norm of the North

Lionsgate, Crest Animation Prod.

Director: Anthony Bell

Written by: Steven Altieri, Daniel Altieri

Starring: Rob Schneider, Ken Jeong, Loretta Devine

Story: When polar bear Norm and his Arctic lemming pals are forced out of their rapidly melting home, they land in New York and Norm begins a new life as a corporate mascot. However, he soon realizes his new employers are the ones responsible for destroying his polar habitat.

The Nut Job

ToonBox Ent., Red Rover

Director: Peter Lepeniotis

Written by: Lorne Cameron

Story: Surly the squirrel and his rat pal Buddy are two street-wise rodents whose mischief disrupts the tranquility of their city park home. When a raging fire forces them to relocate, they get caught up in a convo-

bet, Superfad, Mr & Mrs Smith, Trunk, Cake, Arthur Cox, A for Animation, Tundra and Beakus.

Story: In an odd twist of fate, Johnny the koala is mistaken for a real-life action hero by the critters of the Australian Outback, who enlist his help in defeating the villainous crocodile Bog who is bent on taking over their Billa-



bong home, forcing Johnny to step up and become a true hero.

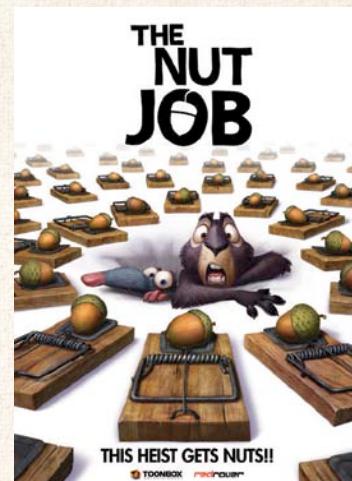
The Snow Queen

Wizart Animation (Russia)

Directors: Vlad Barbe, Maxim Sveshnikov

Written by: Vlad Barbe, Maxim Sveshnikov, Vadim Sveshnikov

Story: A stereoscopic CG take on the classic fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen finds a young girl named Gerda on a quest to rescue her friend Kai, stop the heartless Snow Queen's plots and restore the world to order.



luted bank heist and discover the true meaning of "home."

Outback

The Animation Picture Company, Digiart Prod., Lotte Ent. (U.S./Korea)

Director: Kyung Ho Lee

Written by: Scott Clevenger, Chris Denk, Timothy Wayne Peternel

Starring: Rob Schneider, Tim Curry, Jenni Pulos, Alan Cumming, Frank Welker, Norm McDonald, Yvonne Strahovski





Zambezia

Triggerfish Animation (South Africa)

Director: Wayne Thornley

Written by: Andrew Cook, Anthony Silverston, Raffaella Delle Donne, Wayne Thornley



Starring: Samuel L. Jackson, Leonard Nimoy, Abigail Breslin, Jeff Goldblum, Richard E. Grant, Jeremy Suarez, Phil Cummings, Jenifer Lewis

Story: A young falcon frustrated with his isolated upbringing journeys to the fabled bird city of Zambezia, leaving his father behind in order to make a new life for himself. But when his new community comes under threat he learns that life is really about the connections you make with others.

2013

Escape from Planet Earth Cal Brunker [Rainmaker/The Weinstein Co.] February 14

The Croods Chris Sanders & Kirk DeMicco [DreamWorks] March 22

Leafmen Chris Wedge [Blue Sky/Fox] May 17

Postman Pat: The Movie Mike Disa [RGH Ent./Classic Media] May 24 [U.K.]

Ana & Bruno Carlos Carrera [Lo Coloco Films] May TBA [Mexico]

Monsters University Dan Scanlon [Disney-Pixar] June 21

Despicable Me 2 Pierre Coffin & Chris Renaud [Illumination Ent./Universal] July 3

Turbo David Soren [DreamWorks] July 19

The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter Isao Takahata [Studio Ghibli] Summer TBA [Japan]

Leo the Lion [Weinstein] August 20

The Trick or Treaters [Weinstein] October 25

Me & My Shadow Alessandro Carloni [DreamWorks] November 13



Frozen Chris Buck [Disney] November 27

SantApprentice [Weinstein] December 6

Aunt Hilda! Jacques-Rémy Girerd [Folimage] TBA [France]

Cheech and Chong's Animated Movie Branden Chambers & Eric Chambers [Big Vision Ent.] TBA

The Day of the Crows Jean-Christophe Dessaint [Cofinova/Finallement/Walking The Dog/uFilm] TBA [France]

Odyssey 2050: The Movie Daniel Bermejo & Bruce Callow [Synchro Films] TBA

Evangelion: Final Hideaki Anno, Kazuya Tsurumaki & Masayuki Yamaguchi [Studio Khara] TBA [Japan]

Justin and the Knights of Valour Manuel Sicilia [Kandor Graphics] TBA [Spain]

Khumba Anthony Silverston [Triggerfish] TBA [South Africa]

The Little Fishgirl Jan Balej [Miracle Film/Hafan Film/Marlen Media Group] TBA [Czech Rep.]

Miffy the Movie Hans Perk [A. Film/Telescreen/Mercis/KRO] TBA [Europe]

My Little World Mike Nguyen [July Films] TBA

Planes Klay Hall [DisneyToon Studios] TBA

Ribbit Chuck Powers [Crest Animation/KRU Studios] TBA

Song of the Sea Tomm Moore [Cartoon Saloon] TBA [Ireland]

Space Pirate Captain Harlock Shinji Aramaki [Toei/Marza Animation Planet] TBA [Japan]

Turkeys Jimmy Hayward [Reel FX] TBA

2014

Cloudy 2: Revenge of the Left-overs Cody Cameron & Kris Pearn [Sony] February 7

Mr. Peabody & Sherman Rob Minkoff [DreamWorks] March 14

The Good Dinosaur Bob Peterson & Peter Sohn [Disney-Pixar] May 30

Gofmaniana Stanislav Sokolov [Soyuzmultfilm] May TBA [Russia]

How to Train Your Dragon 2 Dean DeBlois [DreamWorks] June 20

Asterix: The Land of the Gods Alexandre Astier & Louis Clichy [SND/Mac Guff] TBA [France]

Day of the Dead Jorge R. Gutierrez [Reel FX] TBA

The Familiars Doug Sweetland & Fergal Reilly [Sony] TBA

The Legend of Tembo Aaron Blaise & Chuck Williams [Tradition Studios] TBA

Lego: The Piece of Resistance Phil Lord, Chris Miller & Chris McKay [WB/Animal Logic] TBA

The Nut House Ross Venokur [Arc Prod./Vanguard Animation] TBA

Rio 2 Carlos Saldanha [Fox/Blue Sky] TBA

SpongeBob SquarePants [Paramount] TBA

Trouble Down Under Steve Trenbirth [Mad Cow Pictures] TBA [Australia] ■

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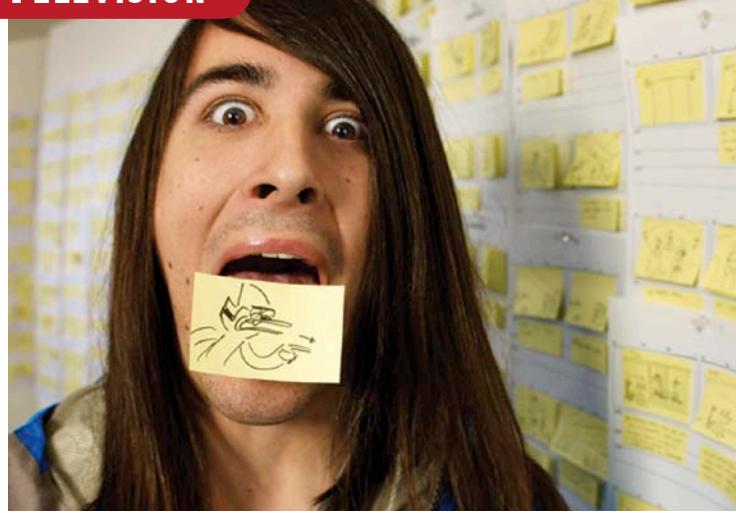
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The Sublime Madness of J.G. Quintel

The last time we chatted with **J.G. Quintel**, he was just about to launch his awesome new animated series *Regular Show* on Cartoon Network. Although the show has only been on the air since September of 2010, it has found a huge cult following all over the world. CN released the show's first compilation DVD on April 3 and Jazwares signed on to become the master toy licensee for the show. So we had to catch up with Mr. Quintel to get the skinny on the what's on tap for this clever, quirky and totally awesome toon:

Animag: So, congrats on the phenomenal success of Mordecai, Rigby and the rest of the gang from *Regular Show*. For those who don't know the history, can you tell us how Cartoon Network picked up the series?

J.G. Quintel: I'd been working as creative director on Cartoon Network's *The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack*. And at the time, they started a development program at the studio called *Cartoonstitute* where you got to pitch your ideas to Craig McCracken and Rob Renzetti. I took some of the characters from my student films and came up with a short pitch, and they gave us the go-ahead.

You studied character animation at CalArts, right?

Quintel: Yes, I graduated from CalArts in 2006. I really wanted to be an animator originally. Then I saw how much work it involved, so I started to learn more about storyboard-ing. I really enjoyed making short films. That's

why I preferred to work in TV because you get to work on a lot of different ideas. It's not like the movies where you work for four years on a two-hour movie. I learned a lot about the medium and technique both at CalArts and my years at Cartoon Network.

Your show follows the adventures of a pair of slackers—a blue jay and a raccoon who hate to work and love to play. Why do you think it has been such a big hit?

Quintel: We are just really making the show that would make us laugh. These are the characters that we know from our own lives. They are our buddies, our friends... they're pretty relatable. I mean it's about not wanting to do chores, not wanting to work, playing videogames, those things are all pretty relatable!

What were some of the influences behind the show?

Quintel: I grew up on *The Simpsons*. I also

really liked *Rocko's Modern Life* and I was lucky enough to work on *Camp Lazlo* as well. Some of the stylistic elements of those shows worked their way into my style. The round eyes, the Muppet-looking characters; these were elements that I grew up with and studied at school.

How did you come up with these specific characters?

Quintel: They all have different stories. I always thought raccoons and blue jays were pretty cool animals. I actually came up with Mordecai for a short that I was working on when I was at school, but I never got to complete it. It was about some animals that escaped from a zoo, and I really liked the character design I had done on a blue jay. I wanted to use him somewhere. I think he's the character that is more like me. Of course, I voice him as well! Rigby had been just a random doodle, a raccoon I had drawn on the side of my desk. He seemed perfect as a buddy for Mordecai. Benson was a gumball machine. He's the boss, someone who needed to yell at the guys and to be the authority figure in the show. Pops was also from a student film I had done. I had drawn this random lollipop character with a top hat and a moustache, and I ended up using him because he was funny. We also wanted a guru character to help them out when they're in trouble, and that was Skips. Yetis are always funny and great to draw!

Can you give us a few hints about what to expect in the fourth season?

Quintel: As you know, we're still in the third season of the show. So it will be quite a few months until the fourth season airs. I can tell you that there will be more development of the Mordecai/Margaret relationship. We're also excited about our first full half-hour episode. It's a pretty epic story and it will be very cool, but that's all I am allowed

to say about it. We're also going to do another Halloween special, which allows us to do three short episodes, like we did before. There will also be a Christmas special in the next batch!

When was the first time you knew you wanted to work in animation?

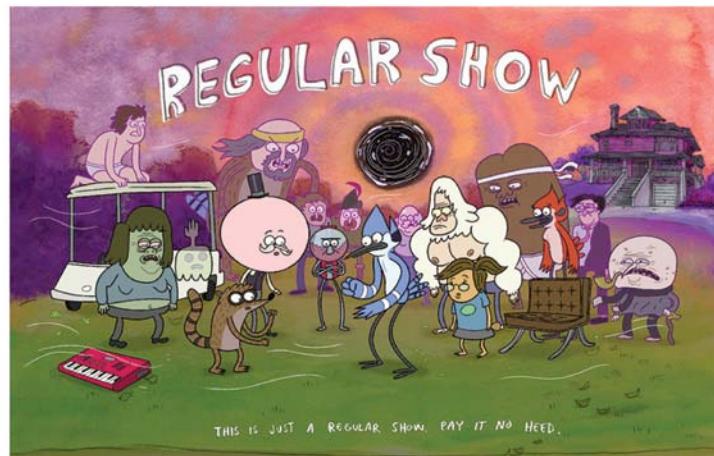
Quintel: I liked drawing as far back as I can remember. My parents put me in art classes. I loved to watch *The Simpsons* and lots of other cartoons. I was also playing lots of videogames (*Streetfighter*, *The Simpsons* arcade game, *The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *X-Men*, *ToeJam & Earl* for *Sega Genesis*, *Shadowrun*). As I got older, I started to make crude cut-out shorts. Then I applied to CalArts and was rejected a couple of times. I needed to learn more about the fundamentals of animation, drawing and perspective. I took classes all over the place. So I became super ready, and then I finally got into the program at CalArts. I really feel lucky to be making this show right now.

What kind of advice do you usually offer wanna-be animators?

Quintel: Start taking animation classes and carry a sketchbook with you. You need to be drawing all the time. Figure drawing is hugely important in getting into animation. Pay real close attention to how things move. If you still find that you like animating, then make things that you want to see, not things that you think others will want to see. This is going to take all your time and effort, so make sure you're creating something that you feel passionate about. Hopefully, others will want to see it, too!

How is your life different now than when you started the show?

Quintel: We are only starting to notice that people actually know about the show. It used to be when I told people what I did, they hadn't heard of the show, but it seems that more and more people have watched the show. They tell us about their favorite episode or actually quote the show. The other day, I was walking to lunch and someone actually stopped me and asked me, 'Hey are you J.G. Quintel?' They told me how much they loved the show and that they watch it with their brother all the time! That was kind of unusual for me!



The Regular Show airs Mondays at 8 p.m. on Cartoon Network. The first *Regular Show* DVD set, "The Slack Pack" (\$14.97) is available now.

On Disc: Summer Stroll Down Memory Lane

DVDs & DOWNLOADS

A brief history of toons is on offer this month, from Disney's new *Arrietty* redo, to *The Looney Tunes Show*, to '90s *Jonny Quest* and even a new *Peanuts* ensemble. by Mercedes Milligan

The Secret World of Arrietty

[Disney, \$29.99]

Thanks to the determined team at Disney, North American audiences were once again treated to an expertly re-scripted, dubbed and re-edited version of one of Studio Ghibli's latest masterpieces this year. This exquisitely rendered take

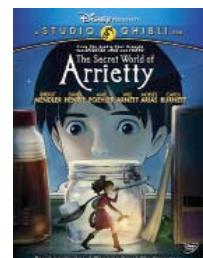
on Mary Norton's beloved classic *The Borrowers* is told from the point of view of Arrietty, a 14-year-old "borrower" who befriends a human boy, putting her family in danger. The film, which won the Japan Academy Prize for Animation of the Year in 2011, was directed by first timer Hiromasa Yonebayashi from a script by Hayao Miyazaki and Keiko Niwa. Gary

Rydstrom directed the North American version for Disney, which features the voice talents of Bridgit Mendler, David Henrie, Will Arnett, Amy Poehler and Carol Burnett.

Arrietty can also be captured in a two-disc DVD/Blu-ray combo pack (\$39.99) which comes with cool Blu-ray features like the original Ghibli storyboards, Japanese spots

and trailers, music videos for Cécile Corbel's theme "Arrietty's Song" and Bridgit Mendler's rendition of "Summertime" as well as a featurette on the making of "Summertime." This pan-cultural tale is a great way to introduce youngsters to this classic story as well as pure eye candy for the traditional animation enthusiast.

[Release date: May 22]



Happiness Is... Peanuts: Team Snoopy

[Warner, \$14.97]

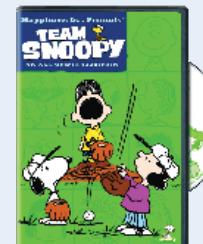
It's another *Peanuts* compilation, Charlie Brown! This latest collection celebrates Charles Schulz's much-adored characters at their most athlet-

ic. First up, one player on Charlie Brown's ambitious baseball team just isn't measuring up in *Lucy Must Be Traded, Charlie Brown* (2003). In the second inning, viewers get a triple header of retro laughs with segments from circa 1985 *The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show: "The Pelicans"*—in which Ol' Cannes

Chuck gets stuck with mascot duties while Peppermint Patty steps firmly forward on the road to victory; "Great Pumpkin"—which finds the *Peanuts* gang visiting the bowling alley in hopes of teaching Charlie Brown a new sport; and in "Spike" we meet Snoopy's mustachioed brother who

trots into town and gets into competition with the neighborhood cat. All in all there's plenty of Lee Mendelson/Bill Melendez ode-to-Schulz glory to go around.

[Release date: May 1]



Jonny Quest: The Real Adventures Season One, Volume 2

[Warner Archive, \$34.99]

It's a retro-toon-revamp kind of month as Warner's old-school distro arm unleashes a new collection of the 1996-97 revamp of the Hanna-Barbera adventure classic *Jon-*

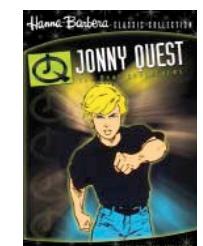
ny Quest. Based on the popular '60s franchise produced by the toon studio for Screen Gems, the '90s update was created by original show designer/comic artist Doug Wildey and originally developed by *ThunderCats*' Peter Lawrence (with your typical fraught toon evolution emerging as the series went on; not to digress) and launched the intrepid characters into new realms rife with

sci-fi and paranormal elements, complete with innovative dives into the CG-rendered "QuestWorld."

The second volume collects 13 episodes onto two discs that find Jonny, his scientist father Benton Quest, bodyguard Race Bannon, pal Hadji and Race's daughter Jessie unraveling mysteries and uncovering strange phenomena across the globe. You'll also be able

to enjoy the special featurette "Journey into QuestWorld" on this set. Hey, any toon franchise that still holds sway after 50 years (see homages from *Venture Bros.*, *Harvey Birdman*, *Freakazoid* and *Floridian ska-punkers Less Than Jake*) is worth keeping in the ol' DVD discography.

[Release date: May 25]



Looney Tunes Show 3-Pack Season 1, Vol. 1-3

[Warner, \$19.98]

And now for your monthly DVD-related face-palm moment. The latest incarnation of Bugs, Daffy and the rest of the Looney Tunes gang (courtesy of Spike

Brandt and Tony Cervone for Warner Bros. Animation) has brought classic slapstick goodness into the 21st century, re-kindling TV audiences' love for the characters. However, love is fickle, and fans may not be loving the fact that they eagerly snapped up each of the four-episode season one volumes as they became available.

For those of you who have resisted so far: Yes, seriously, four episodes per volume.

This three-pack of the first few volumes will at least get the first 12 episodes on your shelf for a reasonable price, but considering Season One wrapped in February we're not sure how much longer they can expect toon fans to

wait for a complete first season release. At least in addition to the Bugs & Daffy foibles you get the hilarious CG Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner shorts from Crew972 et al and all-new Merrie Melodies. As Bugs says, you don't have to be crazy to do this ... but it helps!

[Release date: May 8] ■



Book Of The Kings Rostam & Sohrab

*He dreamt of conquering the entire world
but one man stood between him and his dream*



3D Animation

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